



State employees!

Be aware!

The Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) would like to alert all users of the growing number of ransomware attempts throughout the Internet in recent months.

Ransomware is a malware that takes a computer hostage by encrypting its files, making them unavailable to the victim until a ransom is paid in return for the decryption key. This malware is becoming popular among attackers for several reasons:

- The attack tools are easily available;
- The returns for the attacker are lucrative; and,
- The ransom payment is usually made using bitcoin or other methods that maintain the attacker's anonymity.

Victims often comply because the ransom may only be a few hundred dollars, and the value of their machine and data is considered greater than the ransom.

As with most malware, several methods may be used to attack, either in conjunction with one another or alone. These can include:

- phishing emails with malicious attachments or links;
- pop-ups or fake advertisements claiming to have an update to a popular software; or,
- infected websites.

Remember:

- Never click on links or attachments in unexpected emails.
- Verify any unusual email from a known sender by contacting them in a new email or by calling them.
- Software updates are usually done by IT staff over the network. Always verify any request to update your machine with IT staff.
- Do not download unapproved software from the Internet.
- Data saved to your computer's hard (C:) drive or Desktop will not be backed up. Save data to a server drive so that it will not be lost if your computer is compromised.
- Use your Internet browser's pop-up blocker.
- Turn off the computer and immediately report any unusual problems to the Commonwealth Service Desk at 502.564.7576. Don't respond to the attackers or attempt recovery on your own.
- Be cautious while Internet browsing.

The Commonwealth Office of Technology (COT) is providing this information so that you are aware of the latest security threats and vulnerabilities. If you need to report an incident or breach of security, contact the Commonwealth Service Desk at 502.564.7576.

KENTUCKY PERSONNEL



Questions?
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